

SENATOR ASHFORD: That is one definition. That is not how I am using it in this...in my debate.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Well, I don't care how words are misused.

SENATOR ASHFORD: That's one...there is another definition. That is one definition.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Now, if the crime of shoplifting continues to exist as a crime, how can it exist as a crime and be decriminalized at the same time? And I don't want you to talk all day.

SENATOR ASHFORD: When I use the word decriminalize, I mean as a practical matter cause there to be less criminal actions brought. That is what I mean by decriminalize.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: But the crime...

SENATOR ASHFORD: I may have used the word incorrectly, but by decriminalize that is what I mean.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: But the crime still exists.

SENATOR ASHFORD: The crime still exists.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you. Members of the Legislature, I know you all don't heed what I say, but this is not a bill to decriminalize shoplifting in spite of what you've been told. So let the blind lead the blind and they will both fall in the ditch. But I'm going to distance myself from this nonsense. So the first point Senator Ashford said was that this bill is to decriminalize shoplifting which it does not do. His second point was that you cannot require the county attorney to file a charge which is true, but the problems that merchants were having in the police division, at least in Omaha, got out from under it. The merchants wanted the arresting officer to show up in court as a complaining witness and the police officer, the division said, the officer did not witness anything. All the officer did was made the arrest, so what the stores are going to have to do is produce their own witnesses. The stores did not want to bring witnesses. They want to get out from under the expense of properly doing their business. So when the police division said they would no longer allow their officers to serve as complaining witnesses, then the merchants found another